What the President Will See If He Goes to Alaska

Practically Unknown Wonders of the Territory, from Copper to Oil and from Wheat to Mosquitoes, to Be Displayed to the Nation's Executive

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PRESIDENT HARDING will visit Alaska this summer—Alaska, that terra incognita—supposedly a land of ice and polar bears, yet in reality one of the richest farming and mineral districts in the world. True, it is almost as cold in winter as in the Dakotas; true, it is almost as hot there in summer as in New Jersey. True also, mosquitoes are a pest.

But all this does not alter the fact that Alaska is one of the most valuable possessions of the people of the United States. And their President will see for himself what the Territory needs that it may keep strides with the States in material progress. He will inspect the wonderful mineral and oil resources of the Territory; he will wonder at its scenic beauties; he will be astonished at the fertility of the soil.

Alaska has been neglected by Americans, and has been exploited too much by politicians and schemers. It is virgin soil literally. Wild game abounds; there are 180,000 reindeer roaming the plains. Giant bears, weighing as much as 1,400 pounds and 11 feet from tip to tip, are shot now and then. The thermometer registers a hundred in the shade in summer. Alaska is a "regular" place!

Few residents of the United States have much real information about Alaska, or what living there is like, is indicated in letters to the Interior Department and other branches of the Government which have to do with the Territory. Out on the Pacific coast they refer to Alaska as "our frontier wonderland" and also as "the world's last great out-of-doors."

Occasionally a former resident of Alaska is encountered in continental United States who refers to the Territory as "God's own country" just like the resident of Virginia, Ohio or any other so-called civilized place.

"People other than Indians and Eskimo actually live there and like it!" says the continental American at times. "How can any white man spend his life in a country that consists mainly of a big snow bank, reindeer and natives?"

The Interior Department has long been trying to get continental Americans to sit down for a few minutes and learn what Alaska really is like. Men and women are needed there to develop the country, the Government official who is "sold" on the Territory will tell you.

President Harding's visit probably will encourage hundreds to travel there this summer as tourists. Every time that the President shakes hands with an Indian the wireless will bring to the United States the "story."

They have many wireless stations in Alaska—movies, too. They read all about the Knickerbocker Theater disaster an an hour after it happened in Washington.

How does one get to Alaska? Where does he land and how does he live when he gets there?

What will President Harding see there?

Special Agent Sargent of the Interior Department, who spent last summer in Alaska, could map out an itinerary for the President.

"Here's how," said Sargent, taking down a big map from the wall of his office in the United States Geological Survey. For an hour and a half Sargent talked and drew lines with a red pencil on a map of Alaska.

Ordinary Clothes Needed For a Trip to Alaska

To get under way for Alaska you pack your trunk just as if you were going to Europe and were going to travel in New York and New England in June or October. Same kind of clothing. Leave the fur overcoat at home. Also the medicine chest. There are lots of drug stores in Alaska. You can buy your favorite brand of cigarettes and you'll need no weapons for protection against wolves or wild natives.

Board a steamer at Seattle or San Francisco. Accommodations are on the same palatial scale as in Atlantic travel. In four days your ship docks at Keachikan, at the southeastern corner of Alaska. Leaving the ship, probably you will be accosted by a newsboy who will want to sell you an early edition at 4 P. M. Alaskan newsboys are blood brothers to those at the corner of Forty-second street and Broadway.

Select a seagoing taxi and drive to a hotel. Ketchikan, the second largest town in Alaska, presents an appearance like that of any town of its size in New York State. Its population is 2,854, half native. If you land there in June the temperature probably will be the same as that of New York city in that month. Not much excitement at Ketchikan of the frontier kind. The daily routine of life is enlivened, however, by the Chamber of Commerce meetings, the movies and newspaper reading. They get out extras often in Ketchikan. The wireless brings news hot from all over the world.

Natives, miners in working clothes and some board shacks like those in Bill Hart's best Western movies present the only spectacles with which the continental American would seem unfamiliar. Spend a day at Ketchikan and reship for further north. It is then you will begin to understand why Alaska is called the "frontier wonderland."

On the way to Wrangel and Juneau, the Territorial capital, your ship will pass through a fairyland of islands big and little set close to the mainland. Through the morning haze they look enchanted. Their vegetation, bright green, is seen through a mist. Fleecy summer clouds hang above the islands.

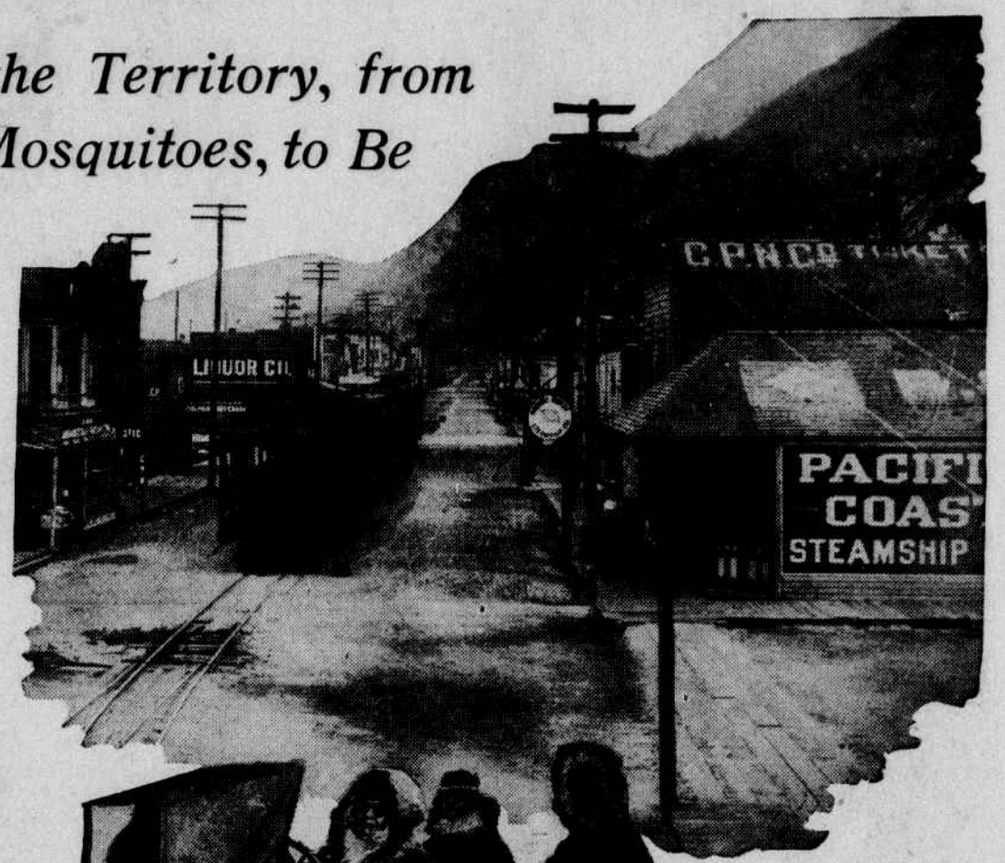
Juneau appears before your steamer nestling on a flat in front of a great mountain peak. Distant a mile, the place looks like a stage setting, with the mountain for a backdrop. Juneau is beginning to reveal Alaska. It is the largest city in the Territory—population 3,072. Before the war 10,000 persons lived there. Mining was brisk. Gold was coming through. Everything was booming. It's beginning to boom again now. But the town has a long way to go before it reaches the pre-war stage of prosperity, officials say.

Juneau, like most other Alaskan cities, boasts a wireless and news of the world every few minutes. Along the coast northwest of Juneau is the glacier territory.

Juneau to Do Honor To President Harding.

At Juneau President Harding will probably stop longest to get in touch with the local government machinery. For that is where the Territorial Government lives and has its being. There will be a grand reception for the President at Juneau. Gov. Scott C. Bone will head the receiving delegation. There will be the head of the Juneau Chamber of Commerce, a delegation of little girls with flowers, the oldest resident, Indian chiefs, reindeer drawn carriages and the local labor unions. Alaska is planning to show that it can welcome a President just as elaborately as New York or Chicago or St. Paul. Preparations already are under way, contingent of course upon the President being able to make the trip. And in speeches after the banquet they're going to tell the President just what Alaska needs from the Government to become the world's paradise. There's nothing wild or woolly about this. It happens in the United States every time the President goes home to Ohio or visits any other place.

At Juneau the President and his party will get a real whiff of Alaska, snowcapped



Some of the sights President Harding will see in Alaska. Above is a street scene in Skagway. At left is a Ford adapted to winter uses. At the extreme left is a typical native family, and in oval is the postmistress of Skagway in winter togs.

in parts, blistering hot in others; reindeer, dog teams, gold, silver, copper, fruit and wheat and all the rest.

The President is going to hear that Alaska, which cost the United States only $7,200,000 about forty-nine years ago, has returned to the United States more than $1,000,000,000.

At Juneau the President has the alternative of two different routes. He can reship to Anchorage, the southern terminal of the 458 mile Government built railroad. From there he can go north right into the heart of Alaska, picking flowers along the way if he wishes. Or the President can take the northern route via the Yukon. This would take him through British Yukon and out of United States territory for a time. He would pass through Dawson and the Klondike region, where the gold discovery startled the world. Then crossing over into Alaska he could make a swing around the entire Territory by steamboat, along the Yukon the whole way. The distance is about 2,500 miles and takes about two weeks. The trip is equivalent to starting at Atlanta, traveling northwest through Kentucky, thence due north through Illinois to Chicago and swinging around to Denver by way of St. Paul, Minneapolis and the Dakotas.

That gives an idea of the size of Alaska. Geographically it is one-fifth the area of the United States. But the population is 55,000, as compared with 105,000,000 for the continent.

If the President should take the Dawson-Yukon steamship route he would likely encounter temperatures ranging up to 100 degrees or a climate about like that of New York. In the winter the same territory has a climate about like the Dakotas. The temperature goes down at times to 40 degrees below zero.

Steaming down the Yukon River, the President and his party will see great forests and innumerable "back door" mines, diggings operated by one or two veteran miners.

At Eagle wireless station, a town exactly at the border between British Yukon and Alaska, the President will be able to get anything he may need in the way of cigarettes, cigars or soda water at either of the two country stores. The wireless station will supply him with a news bulletin. The residents of the town will invite him to hear the latest fox trot on the phonograph.

The phonograph is one of the things that make life bearable in certain sections of Alaska, according to Special Agent Sargent.

"At least every small settlement has one instrument," says Mr. Sargent. "It's usually the center of all neighborhood gatherings."

Six days down the Yukon from Juneau the Presidential party will arrive at Fort Yukon, a thriving settlement of a few hundred persons, a movie, wireless station and an encampment of American soldiers. This is likely to be the furthest north that the President will go. Fort Yukon is right on the Arctic Circle at about 145 degrees west from Greenwich. The day there lasts about twenty hours in the summer. A little further north winter means perpetual night and summer perpetual daylight. There is a hospital at Fort Yukon. Here are treated whites and natives who come in from the mines and reindeer ranches from the north. About 150 miles north of Fort Yukon prospectors discovered oil a few weeks ago, startling the scientific world.

Seven Hundred Mile Trip Down the Yukon.

For nearly 700 miles further the Presidential party can travel down stream on the Yukon, going southwest until the west coast is reached and connections established with the large oceangoing steamers which put into St. Michael, on Norton Sound. The river steamboat will bring the party to the coast at Katlik, about sixty miles south of St. Michael.

You cannot get into St. Michael on a steamer in the winter. Until June the ice floes sweeping down from Bering Strait keep the port closed. But in summer the town has a warm climate and is most agreeable. It receives mail deliveries by steamer at least once a week.

Along the Yukon the President can keep in direct touch with Washington by wireless. Stations are encountered every fifty miles or so. Each afternoon the operators listen in on the world news flashes. They make bulletins and send them to settlers over territory several hundred miles square.

It is more than likely that because his time is limited, the President will elect to enter Alaska by way of Anchorage, on Cook Inlet on the south coast. It is from this point that the development plans of the Government are springing.

Anchorage boasts a population of 1,856 whites. Through it some day will pass the anticipated vast exports of Alaska. The newly completed railroad extending 486 miles north will bring wheat in carloads, minerals, reindeer meat and food, the residents of the Territory predict.

Boarding the railroad, the Presidential party will be whisked to Nenana and later to Fairbanks, right in the center of Alaska and its best development.

Half way between Anchorage and Nenana the President and his party can leave the railroad a day's journey behind and visit some of the highest mountain peaks in the world—Dall, Foraker and McKinley. In the mountains they can hunt wild game if they so desire, game such as the Rocky Mountains in their palmiest sporting days never offered the huntsman. Bear, deer and mountain goats are plentiful.

In the region around Fairbanks will be seen the smiling agricultural industry which is just beginning to thrive in Alaska.

Cauliflower that weighs eleven pounds is produced as an ordinary occurrence about Fairbanks. You can have fruit and fresh vegetables of a variety equal to that of Florida. Wheat is beginning to be produced on a large scale.

Fairbanks, on the Tanaka River, claims to be Alaska's most thriving city. It sports paved streets, parades, multi-storied buildings (exact number not specified) and the Tanaka Club—"No better anywhere."

Fairbanks is primarily a mining town center. Agriculture was developed later. Many persons are locating there for life by taking up land under the homestead law.

Stretching south for nearly 500 miles a delightful automobile road built by the Government leads the tourist party back to the south coast from Fairbanks. The road lies in the valley of the Copper River and strikes the coast at Valdez.

"The worst thing about Alaska cannot be disguised," explains Special Agent Sargent of the Geological Survey. "That thing is lonesomeness. There are only about eleven persons to the square mile in the Territory. Movies, newspapers and the phonograph, however, take off much of the sting.

"Emigration from the United States is bound to increase.

"If you're broke, it's easier to make a living in Alaska than in any place in the world. You can develop a small farm for food and shelter and earn what you need for clothing at odd jobs about the mines. The land can be obtained from the Government."

Reindeer meat, grown in Alaska, is now being sold daily in New York, Baltimore, Philadelphia and other cities.

"It's delicious food," testifies Mr. Sargent.

The native population of Alaska is being taught to grow reindeer under a system of apprenticeship fostered by the Government and the mission schools. A native who works a given time for a certified reindeer owner receives from the Government free two or three animals to form a herd. The new herdsman must, however, allow another native to work for him as an apprentice. In this way the apprentice acquires a herd of his own.

There are now about 180,000 head of domesticated deer in the Territory.

The Shrine of Fitz-Greene Halleck

By AGNES D. CAMP.

ON the fifteenth of May, 1877, a group of men and women that included President Hayes, Bayard Taylor, William Cullen Bryant and many others prominent in the literary and social world met in Central Park, New York, to do homage to Fitz-Greene Halleck, the man who, Mr. Taylor said in his address, "first let loose the Theban eagle in our songless American air."

America was two hundred years old before it publicly dedicated a monument to one of her poets, and no American poet more richly deserved the dictinction bestowed upon him than that lyrical genius Fitz-Greene Halleck. And no city, next to Guilford, Conn., his birthplace, deserved the honor of the first monument of its kind in our history as New York. There is not a street in the lower part of Manhattan that had not echoed to his footfall.

"I shall never cease to 'hail,' as the sailors say, from your good city of New York, of which a residence of fifty years made me a citizen. There I have always considered myself at home, and elsewhere but a visitor," Halleck wrote to a friend just before he died.

The poet counted among his best friends Washington Irving, Fenimore Cooper, MacDonald Clarke, John James Audubon, William Cullen Bryant, but the dearest and closest friend of all was Joseph Rodman Drake. When the poet Drake died at 25 from consumption, Halleck wrote his epitaph, the lines of which for pathos and tenderness are unequaled in American poetry:

"Green be the turf above thee,
Friend of my better days;
None knew thee but to love thee
Nor named thee but to praise."

Upon hearing of the death of another friend, Richard Cumberland, Halleck said: "Light, say I, be his ashes, and hallowed be the turf that pillows his head."

In 1837 there was organized an authors' club, of which Washington Irving was chosen president and Halleck vice-president. This was not the first authors' club in New York city. There was another of which Fitz-Greene Halleck was a regular attendant; that was the famous Bread and Cheese Club, organized in 1824 by Fenimore Cooper. This club met at Washington Hall, Broadway and Chambers street, which later became the Stewart warehouse. The Stewart building now standing on the old site is at the present time occupied by THE NEW YORK HERALD.

To become a member of these clubs one had to be famous for something—artist, author, merchant, and so on. Halleck had proposed for membership his good friend G. L. Edwards, a doctor, who had an impediment in his speech.

"What did you tell the club I am famous for?" asked the doctor.

"Stuttering," laughingly replied Halleck.

For a long time the poet made his home at Bixley's hotel, at the corner of Broadway and Park place. When Bixley went out of business Halleck, disgusted with the "villainous alterations, miscalled improvements," going on down town, migrated to the St. Denis, at Eleventh street and Broadway, where, he said, they charged as much a day as he had paid as a boy a week. He wrote home to Guilford from the St. Denis and told about the fine sleighing route "out of town, on the Bloomingdale, Harlem and Manhattanville roads; and the public houses on the roads are so thronged that a person can hardly elbow his way into the house."

Can the wildest imagination picture a beautiful lane bordered with green hedges where Twenty-first street, between Sixth and Seventh avenues, is to-day? In Halleck's day there was such a spot, called "Lovers' Lane," and almost any morning two poets, arm in arm, strolled up and down this delightfully green lane. They were Halleck and his bosom friend, Joseph Rodman Drake. At the end of this charming retreat stood a fine old country mansion. It was occupied by Henry Eckford, a wealthy shipbuilder. The two poets never left the sylvan quietness of Lovers' Lane without first greeting the hospitable family, particularly their lovely daughters, one of whom Drake married.

Fitz-Greene Halleck lived to see many changes in his dear New York, but he never forgot the things he loved best about the city. He would entertain his friends for hours with anecdotes of the days when De Witt Clinton was Mayor of New York city; the time of Robert Fulton, when a steamboat left every Tuesday and Saturday for Albany, taking two days to get there, and a stage started from the corner of Cortlandt street and Broadway daily for Boston and Philadelphia, and the town boasted the whole of a hundred thousand inhabitants.

At that time it was easy to reach the green hills, the ripe orchards and the grain fields. The town was not built above Canal street, through which, after passing Lispenard's meadows, a sluggish streamlet trickled into the Hudson River. Beyond this Manhattan was multiform in its charms, with hills and hollows, small woods relieving the sunny openings, glistening tracks of rivulets, quiet country houses with neat gardens, wide avenues of trees and miles of green hedges. On the North River bank above Canal street the shadowy rocks projected way out into the water, with little angles between; branches of fruit trees, laced and interlaced with trailing vines, dropped from above. On the East River the Stuyvesant estate reached to cliffs jutting over the water, and further on were little bays and rocky banks bristling with red cedars.